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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: MILITARY INTEGRATION DIFFICULTIES ON DISPLAY AT
LUBERIZI TRAINING FACILITY

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) Summary: A recent tour of the DRC's military training and integration facility in Luberizi, South Kivu, highlighted the challenges facing GDRC officials charged with reforming the country's security sector. A lack of equipment and logistical support hamper efforts to create a unified and professional army. Soldiers choosing integration must live under difficult and often crowded conditions, while receiving only limited basic instruction and training. Nonetheless, morale was good among troops and the base's commanders are able to maintain discipline and order. End summary.

¶2. (C) During a late May visit to South Kivu, PolOff toured the Congolese military's (FARDC) training and integration facility (in French known as "centre du brassage") in Luberizi, approximately 45 miles south of the provincial capital Bukavu. The site, a former Mobutu-era commando training camp near the border with Burundi, has produced two of the DRC's current 14 integrated brigades (IBs) -- the 6th (presently deployed in Ituri District) and the 11th (formerly deployed in North Kivu, but now based in South Kivu's Shabunda territory). At the time of the May 24 visit, an additional integrated brigade, tentatively slated to become the 16th IB, was being trained. The facilities were established as a means of bringing together into a national army under a central command the DRC's various armed groups after the country's civil war, providing a basic and common level of training to all forces, creating new units and command structures, and later deploying the new integrated brigades throughout the country.

¶3. (C) FARDC and MONUC officials generally regard Luberizi as a model for how such facilities should be operated. MONUC officials in Bukavu and Uvira said the center has rarely had discipline problems with soldiers stationed there, nor have there been notable incidents of ethnic-based conflict as has been the case in Katanga and Bas-Congo provinces. Indeed, PolOff's visit revealed a base that seemed to be orderly and well-run, albeit with some difficulties, with a clear command structure in place. Soldiers appeared to be disciplined, and officers interviewed by PolOff repeatedly expressed their desire to create a well-trained army.

LIVING CONDITIONS OFTEN CROWDED, INADEQUATE

¶4. (C) Several significant problems exist at Luberizi, however, that hinder integration and training efforts. First among these is the state of the facilities and housing for the soldiers. As of late May, Luberizi had 4,401 troops being

trained by an 185 Congolese officers. Luberizi's commanding officer, Colonel Shulungu Nembeso Otoko, said the base is near maximum capacity, as it can only accommodate 5,000. Shulungu said there are 153 barracks that serve as housing and are often in disrepair. Most buildings at the base are simple one-story cinder-block buildings with tin roofs, with limited electricity provided by generators.

15. (C) There are an additional 2,600 dependents at Luberizi although they are not housed on the base itself. Shulungu said the wives and children of the soldiers, plus those of the trainers, all live in the surrounding communities off the local economy. Many officers said that because of a lack of housing, their families could not follow them to Luberizi resulting in separations of months. Several soldiers complained the burden of separation often eroded morale.

16. (C) The generally crowded conditions at Luberizi have created health and hygiene problems. Shulungu and his chief medical officer said Luberizi has had several dozen outbreaks of cholera in the past six months, and as of late May, still had seven infected soldiers on site. Shulungu claimed he often faces a shortage of medicine for his soldiers as FARDC officials in Bukavu and Kinshasa rarely provide an adequate supply. In addition, many officers said there was little potable water at the facility, adding to health problems and the cholera outbreaks. Shulungu admitted the lack of clean drinking water was a constant difficulty.

TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT LACKING

17. (C) Soldiers arriving at Luberizi receive nine weeks of
KINSHASA 00000659 002 OF 002

training, including courses on weapons handling, tactics, plus military discipline and respect for human rights. Shulungu said most who come to the facility have some knowledge of basic soldiering, although in general, former Mai-Mai combatants are the least-trained and require the most attention. He added that up to 30 percent of new soldiers at Luberizi are illiterate, making training more difficult. Many officers said soldiers learned a great deal during the 45-day program, but said the time was too short and that more field training was required to ensure unit cohesion. Shulungu said the Belgian military plans to provide future training for company commanders, and South Africa intends to begin a program for senior-level commanders.

18. (C) Some officers noted that training was hindered by a lack of equipment. While the troops seen at Luberizi appeared disciplined, most rank-and-file soldiers had no uniforms, weapons or other essentials. Shulungu said most weapons training is carried out with carved sticks substituting for rifles; PolOff saw several formations practicing drills while wearing civilian clothes and carrying pieces of wood. Luberizi also lacks a firing range to train with even the few weapons available, although MONUC peacekeepers intend to build one in the coming month.

SALARIES ARRIVE, BUT SOMETIMES LATE

19. (C) Regular payment of salaries did not, however, appear to be a big concern for many soldiers. Most said they were paid regularly, albeit sometimes late due to bureaucratic inefficiencies. (Note: Soldiers here are paid regularly because they are at a central location that benefits from EUSEC's chain-of-payment reform program. End note.) Shulungu said the lowest-ranking troops are paid USD 30 per month, which often is not enough to provide for their families. Some senior officers at Luberizi complained, however, that some soldiers, notably ex-Mai Mai fighters, received no money at all. Shulungu explained that these soldiers (a small fraction

of the total at Luberizi) were not entitled to salaries since they had not officially been members of the army before integrating. He added that they would begin receiving payments once their new integrated brigade had been formed. Many officers warned that this "inequality" was creating tensions among the rank-and-file.

COMMENT: HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED FOR REFORM

¶10. (C) Comment: Luberizi is a prime example of the difficulties facing security sector reform efforts in the DRC. Living conditions are inadequate, training is minimal, and equipment is almost non-existent -- elements which when combined undermine the creation of an effective and cohesive force. Instead of serving as a facility meant to improve the quality of soldiers entering the Integrated Brigades, centers like Luberizi are little more than way stations before future deployments. These issues will need to be resolved if the GDRC is to ever field a unified, professional national army capable of defending its borders and respecting the rights of its citizens. End comment.

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